

Subject: Expression of Gratitude and Commitment Following Internet Governance Training

I commence this report by expressing my deep gratitude to Ms. Gunela, the chair of the Accessibility Standing Group at ISOC, and Dr. Muhammad Shabbir, the CEO of Pathfinder Solutions, for their collaborative efforts in organising this exceptionally unique event in Islamabad. I am Salman Khalid, a visually impaired college lecturer from Lahore, certified by the UN as a trainer for youth with disabilities, actively advocating for disability rights, and providing instruction in accessibility technology to blind students. I am writing to convey my heartfelt appreciation and post-training aspirations to the Internet Society and Pathfinder Solutions.

This great initiative of conducting Internet Governance training brought together individuals with disabilities, myself included, resulting in significant benefits.

The training program stands as a milestone in Pakistan, being the first instance where persons with disabilities were introduced to Internet Governance and its vast domain through a vibrant and highly productive training initiative. Given my keen interest in digital accessibility and inclusion for persons with disabilities, this training covered various aspects related to these crucial areas.

Despite my membership in ISOC for the past few years, I had not fully explored the advantages and effectiveness of active participation and a deep understanding of Internet Governance. This training has provided profound insights into crucial areas such as the digital ecosystem, current trends, identification and solutions for accessibility in the digital landscape, internet as a decentralized entity, role of civil society as an effective stakeholder, and valuable information about privacy and cybersecurity.

The sessions delivered a useful learning among participants, covering topics like digital accessibility, and disseminated information about opportunities such as fellowships for IGF programs and grants for proposed projects. Understanding Pakistan's digital ecosystem was crucial, and enlightening sessions shed light on various factors.

As a visually impaired accessibility enthusiast, I recognized the significance of my potential role in relevant digital domains. Engaging discussions about policy-making and the inclusion of persons with disabilities proved to be a valuable exercise. Interactions with fellow persons with disabilities allowed me to build connections, and enlightening presentations by the esteemed speakers significantly contributed to acquiring key learnings related to Internet Governance and its stakeholders.

In conclusion, my aspiration is to contribute more effectively in the relevant domains after completing this training. I plan to conduct sessions in Lahore, educating other persons with disabilities about Internet Governance and digital accessibility, spreading awareness and encouraging active participation. Additionally, I intend to propose a webinar on the same subject to the organizations with whom I conduct online courses for visually impaired students in Pakistan, covering the basics of Internet Governance and Digital Accessibility, emphasizing the role of persons with disabilities.

Furthermore, I am committed to educating more blind individuals to report digital inaccessibility issues to the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA). Through substantial contributions in this regard, and by trying to be more vocal and an agent of change, I hope to bring about positive outcomes and uplift not only my own understanding, but to educate other fellow PWDs regarding Internet Governance and the associated areas.

Once again, I extend my sincere thanks for this invaluable opportunity for persons with disabilities in Pakistan and look forward to making a positive impact following the completion of this three-day training program.

Sincerely,

Salman Khalid